

# Content

# Five Paragraph Essay

Introduction announcing your thesis listing  
POINT 1, POINT 2, POINT 3

Body paragraph discussing POINT 1

Body paragraph discussing POINT 2

Body paragraph discussing POINT 3

Conclusion restating thesis

You are capable of  
so much more.

# Closed thesis

The idea of 'language is power' can be expressed through how it is used to convey identity, to shape attitudes, and to distort reality.

# Open thesis

Language is so powerful, it shapes every aspect of our lives; our understanding of the world is indivisible from our understanding of language.

The thesis may not  
even be in your first  
paragraph!

Move #1: Read sources carefully

Move #2: Analyze each source's argument: what data is cited, what assumptions are made?

Move #3: Generalize about your own potential stands on the issue

Move #4: Imagine each of the authors of the sources responding to your potential stands

Move #5: Refine your point into central thesis

Move #6: Argue a position by incorporating within your thinking the imaginary conversations you had with the authors.

# Provide commentary

Textual citations have no value without explanation. By providing commentary, you explain HOW and WHY the given evidence supports or proves the point.



# “They say” / “I say”

X argues \_\_\_\_\_, and I agree because \_\_\_\_\_.

X’s argument that \_\_\_\_\_ is supported by theories furthered by Y showing that \_\_\_\_\_.

# Introducing what “they say”

X insists that \_\_\_\_\_.

The standard way of thinking about X is  
\_\_\_\_\_.

Although X does not say so directly, X  
apparently assumes that \_\_\_\_\_.

X agrees when she writes, “\_\_\_\_\_” (citation).

# “I say”: Qualifying sources

While X is probably wrong when she claims \_\_\_\_\_, she is right that \_\_\_\_\_.

I do support X's position that \_\_\_\_\_, but I find Y's argument about \_\_\_\_\_ to be equally persuasive.

# Indicating why your claims matter

Ultimately, what is at stake is \_\_\_\_\_.

Although X may seem of concern to only a small group of \_\_\_\_\_, it should in fact concern anyone who cares about \_\_\_\_\_.

# “I say”: Agreeing with sources

I agree that \_\_\_\_\_ because my experience  
\_\_\_\_\_ confirms it.

X's theory of \_\_\_\_\_ is extremely useful  
because it sheds insight into \_\_\_\_\_.

The ideas presented by X are bolstered by the  
concept introduced in Y \_\_\_\_\_.

# “I say”: Disagreeing with sources

X's claim that \_\_\_\_\_ rests upon the questionable assumption that \_\_\_\_\_.

By focusing on \_\_\_\_\_, X overlooks the deeper problem of \_\_\_\_\_.

# Weaving it all together

In recent discussions of \_\_\_\_\_, an emerging issue has been whether \_\_\_\_\_. On one hand, X argues \_\_\_\_\_. Her experiences are shaped by \_\_\_\_\_. At times my own experience confirm this, such as when \_\_\_\_\_. On the other hand, however, Y claims that \_\_\_\_\_. In the words of Z, “\_\_\_\_\_.” According to this view, \_\_\_\_\_. The deeper issue is whether \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_. Taking all these attitudes together, what emerges is \_\_\_\_\_.

# BE NIMBLE

## ASSEMBLY OF FACTS

VS.

## ARGUMENT WITH SOURCES THAT SUPPORT YOUR REASONING

Use what you need, when you need it. Let the structure be determined by what you're trying to do, not some artificial form.

Make the material your own; you call the shots.